Saskatchewan
Education

Removing Barriers

Accessibility to Adult Basic Education for Disabled Adults

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REMOVING BARRIERS

Accessibility to Adult Basic Education

for Disabled Adults

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The provision of adult basic education for students with special needs is not a new issue in Saskatchewan. It has, however, developed a greater urgency in recent years for a number of reasons.

Special education provided in the K-12 school system has generated a demand for equivalent services for school students turned adult. On the other hand, adult basic education personnel have become increasingly aware that a significant number of their students have learning and other disabilities - in part, at least, the reason for their requiring ABE.

The Advisory Committee on Adult Special Education was appointed by Colleges Branch in October 1986. This report documents its work, findings and recommendations.

The committee found a general scarcity of adult special education resources and expertise in the province. Beyond that, it found an inequitable distribution of resources and opportunities, so that rural and northern Saskatchewan have little of either.

The committee hopes that calling attention to the issue of adult special education, and discussion of this report, will lead to a more comprehensive and systematic attempt to provide more educational services for disabled adults. Realizing its own limitations, the committee recommends that a broader-based committee be established to carry forward its work, and to advise the Department of Education on an on-going basis regarding services to adults with special needs.

The members of the committee wish to acknowledge, with gratitude, the considerable time and effort respondents to questionnaires put into providing thoughtful and comprehensive information. It is hoped that they will find, because of action on the report's recommendations, that it has not been in vain.

Recommendations appear in the text and in Appendix A, on page 34.

I. INTRODUCTION

Saskatchewan makes provision, by legislation and policy, for providing special education services from kindergarten to grade 12, and to age 21. Over the past decade the Department of Education and school jurisdictions have collaborated to ensure that every child with special needs is provided with appropriate educational opportunities. Special education consultants throughout the province work with schools; universities provide training in special education for K-12 teachers, and funding is provided to school boards to defray the additional cost of special education services.

It is time to develop a similar capacity in the adult education sector, to ensure that disabled adults with continuing education needs, whether they have reached 21 years of age and are no longer served by the K-12 system, or are simply wishing to continue their training and education, will find the post-secondary system in general, and colleges in particular, well prepared to accommodate them. Some capacity has been developed, however there is a need for a wider variety of services and province wide accessibility.

An increasing demand for adult basic special education is bringing to light difficulties in providing adequate service both to learning disabled adults, and adults with sensory/motor disabilities.

ABE coordinators are concerned that, without required adaptations to accommodate disabled adults, colleges will have difficulty serving clients requesting entrance.

In October, 1986 the Community Colleges Branch of the Department of Advanced Education and Manpower appointed an Advisory Committee on Adult Special Education. Terms of reference of the committee and its membership are found in Appendix B, p. 39. The committee, made up of college and department personnel, was to explore the issue of adult special education as it relates to ABE, and to recommend policies and procedural changes to colleges and the department.

The committee adopted the World Health Organization definition of disability, i.e.:

> "Disability is the loss or reduction of functional ability and activity that is consequent upon impairment. (It is characterized by excesses and deficiencies of behavior and other functions customarily expected of the body or its parts. It involves functional limitation and/or activity restriction.)"

Disabilities identified for investigation included:

1) Sensory/Motor (visual/hearing impairment and physical disabilities).
2) Behavioral (substance abuse and emotional disturbance).
3) Communication Disorder (e.g. from cerebral palsy or dysphasia).
4) Mental Retardation.
5) Learning Disabilities.

The committee sought information about adult disabilities and implications for special education from a broad range of sources. There was a substantial response to questionnaires mailed out by the committee (see Appendix C, p. 41). The wealth of information received will, unfortunately, be only imperfectly represented by this report.

II. THE NEED FOR ADULT SPECIAL EDUCATION

Incidence of Disability; Education & Labour Force Participation

The Canadian Health Disability Survey conducted by the Health Division of Statistics Canada in 1983-84, (see Appendix D, p. 42) found that:

- 1 in every 10 adults of working age (15 to 64 years) is disabled (substance abuse and learning disabilities were not included in the survey).
- 2 of every 5 disabled adults have less than grade 9 education. This compares with 1 of every 5 non-disabled adults. The ages of disabled adults with less than grade 9 are shown in Table 2, Appendix E, p. 43.
- 2 of every 3 disabled adults are not in the labour force. This compares to 1 of every 3 non-disabled adults, and is not necessarily related to the severity of the disability. It may be that attitude, lack of opportunity, and lack of marketable skills are more significant factors in a choice not to seek work (see Table 3, Appendix E, p. 44).
- The unemployment rate for disabled adults who do participate in the labour force is considerably higher than that of non-disabled adults. In particular, the unemployment rate of disabled adults in the key working age group of 35 to 54 years is double that of the non disabled key working age group of 35 to 54 years the unemployment rate of disabled adults is double that of the non-disabled.

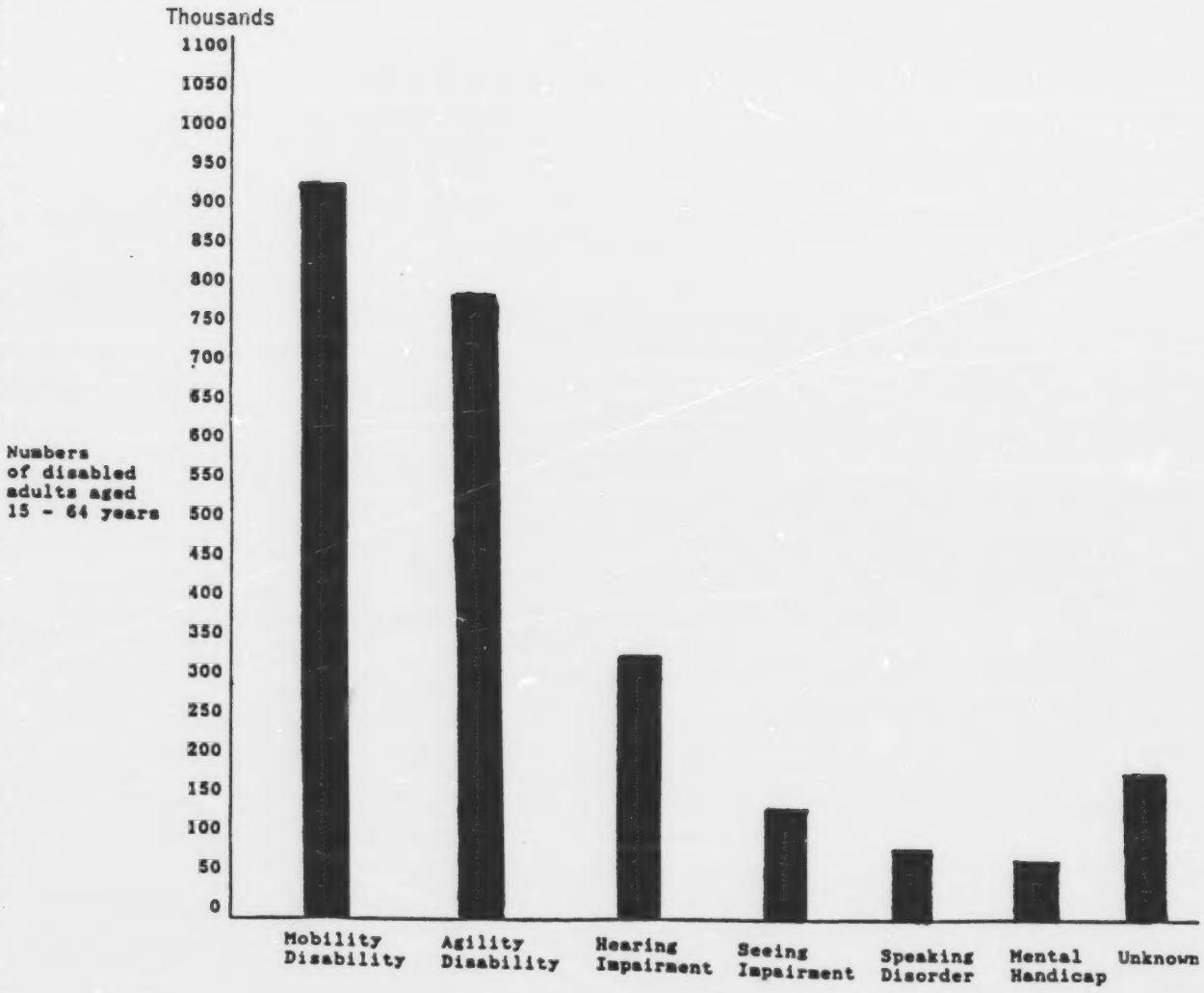
- Approximately half of the disabled adults surveyed indicated that they had incurred extra expenses during the previous twelve months as a result of their disabling condition.

The survey estimated that there were 61,000 disabled persons between the ages of 15 and 64 years in Saskatchewan. Although the report did not provide a breakdown of all the types of disability in Saskatchewan, it did indicate that there are 17,000 seeing disabled adults, of whom 14,000 use aids; 36,000 hearing disabled adults, of whom 9,000 use aids; and 72,000 mobility disabled adults, of whom 20,000 use aids.

It is significant to note that "a disproportionately large number of disabled people live in rural areas" of the province (Saskatchewan Demographic, Economic and Labor Market Overview, December 1987, p. 15).

The following chart illustrates the nature of disabilities experienced by Canadian adults aged 15 to 64 years. It is assumed that the national proportions are reflected provincially.

Table 4: THE NATURE OF THE DISABILITY OF DISABLED PERSONS AGED 15 TO 64 YEARS IN CANADA 1983-84 (ROUNDED TO THOUSANDS)



Identification of Educational Needs of Disabled Adults

The committee had no systematic means of identifying the educational needs of the province's disabled adults. The following information was provided by agencies and organizations responding to our questionnaires and cannot be verified.

The Saskatchewan Department of Education estimates that 1,124 disabled students currently enrolled in the K-12 system will need continuing educational services as adults.

Twenty-eight agencies (e.g., the Saskatchewan Abilities Council, Services for Hearing Impaired Persons, Disabled Persons Employment Services, and Wascana Rehabilitation Centre) identified multiple educational needs of disabled adults: 2,821 disabled adult clients needing academic studies at the adult 1-12 level, with a further 7,193 requiring life skills, career exploration, job readiness training, and work experience programs. The need for post-secondary education or vocational training was indicated for 336 adults.

College counsellors report an increasing demand for educational services by adults with disabilities. Of almost 700 disabled adults seeking services, 90 were referred to an Adult Basic Education Program and 102 referred to other education or support services. Hearing impaired and learning disabled are the larger groups, except for substance abuse which counts for 50%.

The VRDP selection committee in Saskatchewan indicated that they were unable to fund all the programs proposed for disabled adults during 1986-87. Although meeting eligibility criteria for VRDP funding, therefore, adults identified for those programs were not provided training.

III. CURRENT ADULT SPECIAL EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

In Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan's urban public post-secondary institutions are experiencing the most demand for service from disabled adults. The University of Regina and the technical institutes indicate that a fractional number of their student populations are disabled. Urban community colleges on the other hand indicate an enrollment of 5 to 30% of disabled adults in their adult basic education programs.

Some developments in the college system are particularly encouraging; for example, specific adult basic education programs for hearing impaired adults have been developed in Saskatoon and Regina colleges during the past four years. In Cypress Hills Community College at Swift Current a project funded by the Neil Squire Foundation is developing the computer operation skills of a number of severely physically disabled

individuals, prior to enrolling them in college programs. A number of colleges have offered independent living skills programs during the past decade and most recently the Saskatoon college in co-operation with Kelsey Institute and the Saskatchewan Association for the Mentally Retarded, and with federal funding, put on a program which combined the traditional independent living skills activities with specific vocational training.

The provincial GED testing service makes provision for testing in Braille or by means of audio tapes. In addition some of the agencies serving disabled adults offer employment preparation, disability adjustment and training on the job programs. Most of the private vocational schools report little experience with disabled students.

It appears, by the responses to our questionnaires, that there is a need for research in the province concerning adult special education. Some developmental work is going on with respect to new programming and the University of Saskatchewan has a particular interest in learning-disabled adults, but applied research or even documentation of existing experience in adult special education in the province is conspicuously absent.

In Other Provinces

In 1982 the Ministry of Education in British Columbia adopted a policy on the provision of adult special education programs in the public education system. Since that time, British Columbia has produced a wide range of resource materials for instructors and funded professional development conferences and workshops on disabilities. Approximately 4.5 million dollars is allocated annually for college programs and support services for disabled students. The province also publishes a directory of adult special education programs and services available to disabled students.

In 1983 various Alberta departments reached a services agreement outlining the responsibilities for provision and funding of programs and services for persons with disabilities. Support and counselling units have been established at various post-secondary institutions for students with disabilities who require special support to participate successfully in existing programs. Funding is provided for a wide range of post-secondary education and training programs for staff of provincial institutions.

The presidents of Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology established a task force in 1985 to investigate college services to special needs students. The December 1986 report of this task force had

two purposes: to describe in detail the significant mandate that faces the colleges as a result of legislative initiative, and to recommend strategies and procedures which would enable the colleges to serve, more adequately, the needs of disabled students. The guiding principles developed by this task force are a useful reference for Saskatchewan.

The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), in February, 1987, issued "Opportunities: Post-secondary Education and Training for Students with Special Needs." Reviewing measures taken by provinces to facilitate participation by special needs students in post-secondary opportunities, the statement acknowledges that "there remains much room for further progress . . ." (p. 9.)

The CMEC identifies some priority areas for continued and focused effort by provincial ministers and institutions (see Appendix F, p. 45).

All provinces provide education and rehabilitation services to eligible adults through the Vocational Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons Program (VRDP), cost-shared with the federal government. In addition, several provinces, in particular Alberta, British Columbia, and Ontario have specific provincial policies on adult special education and provide funding additional to that available through VRDP for educational services to special needs adults.

All VRDP programs in all but one province recognize substance abuse and learning disabilities for funding purposes.

IV. TOWARD MEETING THE NEED

Policy

The existence of a VRDP program and recent encouragement of technical institutes to develop affirmative action programs for disabled persons as well as other special needs groups suggests a recognition of the need for provincial leadership in adult special education.

Only 3 of the 27 institutions surveyed have specific policies regarding disabled students (The University of Regina, Wascana Institute, and Saskatoon Region Community College). It should be noted that Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST) will be approaching the Human Rights Commission with a comprehensive policy for natives, women and the disabled. None of these policies is comprehensive, dealing primarily with questions of access. Their existence, however, suggests that at least some institutions are aware of the issue.

Although there are discrepancies in the local policies and operations of the province's public and regional library systems, the Saskatchewan Library has very specific policies regarding special needs patrons. These include the provision of centralized collections of special format materials, applied research to study library services to special needs patrons, training for library staff, and cooperation with other agencies to provide, promote, or enhance library services for special needs patrons.

The Saskatchewan Library is currently chairing a Task Force on Library Services for People with Disabilities.

Implicit in all the responses to the committee was the need for provincial policy regarding educational services to disabled adults. Such policy needs to be pro-active, because increased participation by disabled adults will require not only improvements in physical access but also provision for support services and program flexibility to ensure the success of disabled students.

While almost all institutions responding to the survey expressed a willingness to enroll disabled adults, only four indicated that special tutors, aides, equipment, and other support services were provided within course costs. Another four would provide assistance to link the student to other agencies to seek support, and eight noted support could be provided at the institution if another agency covered the cost.

In any event, disabled people are not well represented in student populations. Of the 27 post-secondary institutions which responded to our survey, 13 indicated that none of their student population is disabled. Most institutions report less than 1% of their current student population is disabled, although some colleges reported the suspicion that up to half the ABE student population suffer from learning disability or substance abuse.

Institutions look to sponsoring agencies to fund adult special education services, rather than providing for them in ongoing program costs. Consequently, specialized staff and appropriate support services, instructional materials, and equipment are not readily available and must be recruited or acquired after a disabled adult enrolls. This serves to discourage recruitment or enrollment of disabled students and severely limits the educational services which can be provided to them.

This lack of preparedness by institutions is itself a barrier to enrollment for all but the most aggressive disabled adults, and delays delivery of an appropriate program, if any at all. Delays mean, of course, that the student has to catch up. Provincial and institutional policy must recognize the need for adjustments in operations and program delivery, and the need for special equipment, additional time and expertise required to work with disabled students.

Leadership by the province, including the development of guidelines to meet special needs and the provision of special needs funding, are required to make adult education truly accessible to the disabled adult.

The committee recommends:

1. That a Saskatchewan provincial policy be developed which ensures that disabled adults have full access to appropriate educational opportunities.
2. That adult education institutions adopt pro-active adult special education policies.
3. a) That guidelines, developed in relation to these policies, identify a degree of preparedness to provide adult special education services provincially (system wide) and institutionally.

   b) That ongoing operating budgets reflect the cost of implementing these guidelines.
4. That programs in which disabled students enroll provide access to special education services including such staff expertise, instructional resources, modified facilities and reduced student/teacher ratios, as may be appropriate.

Co-ordination

A number of respondents to our survey urged the committee to examine the relationship between educational systems and programs. Articulation between systems and programs is much more critical for the disabled than for the non-disabled student. Some form of structured progression from adult basic education to vocational programs to employment is necessary. The need for this is recognized by the VRDP program, which requires a vocational plan be developed before sponsoring an individual.

In a number of centers, college ABE staff have been informally assisted by special education consultants in the K-12 system to identify appropriate materials and design training plans for special needs students. In other centers, college counsellors have provided career counselling services to K-12 students. Several college co-ordinators call for increased interaction of this nature. Particularly in rural Saskatchewan, the encouragement of joint appointments and other resource sharing would make more services available to both disabled children and adults.

Although much of the equipment necessary to provide special education services to adults is both affordable and available to local institutions, some specialized instructional equipment is costly and/or needed only rarely. Disabled students sponsored by VRDP can have such equipment supplied to them personally. However, delays in acquisition

can severely impede their progress in an educational program, and when the student leaves the program the equipment goes with him. There is no mechanism in place at present for co-ordination and sharing of such equipment nor for the provision of specialized instructional equipment for disabled adults who enroll without VRDP sponsorship.

There is a wide variety of disabling conditions and a wide range of incapacitation within these conditions. An instructor may be required in his professional career to work with only one student with a certain type or degree of disability. However, with access to reference material, resources, and opportunity to consult experts, the instructor will, generally, be able to provide an effective educational program. These support services, respondents insist, are critical.

Frequent reference was made in our surveys to the need for access to expertise, special education consultants, and special testing services. Better liaison between colleges, disability centers, and agencies serving or representing disabled adults was advised.

Saskatchewan Education indicated that instructors need access to consultation regarding specific disabilities and program adaptation. They suggested specialist instructors as well as a continuing consultation service. Adult basic education programs would benefit substantially from the appointment of a provincial adult special education consultant and the establishment of a reference and resource service. In addition to information on disabling conditions the

reference and resource service could provide sample modifications to curricula and recommend appropriate instructional materials and equipment. The consultant could be available to program staff, counsellors, and instructors throughout the province to assist in the design and development of appropriate training plans for special needs students. This consultant could, as well, play a lead role in ensuring co-ordination between the K-12 and post-secondary systems and among post-secondary institutions.

To address the issue of coordinated planning and support for adult special education the committee recommends:

5. That Saskatchewan Education provide leadership and support regarding adult special education by:
   a) appointing a provincial adult special education consultant;
   b) ensuring the availability of an adult special education reference and resource service including a central loan service for costly specialized instructional equipment;
   c) providing for co-ordination between the K-12 and post-secondary systems and within the post-secondary system in relation to resource sharing and assisting students with special needs to achieve their personal, educational, and vocational goals.
6. That Saskatchewan Education design and implement a systematic adult special education needs identification process, incorporating agency, K-12, and post-secondary institutional input, to facilitate informed planning to be undertaken by the post-secondary system.

Public Awareness

People in rural and Northern Saskatchewan identified a lack of information and awareness regarding existing services for disabled adults, and commend the VRDP selection committee for touring the province with information in Fall, 1986.

The Decade of the Disabled was declared, in part, because of a lack of public awareness regarding issues affecting disabled people. This same lack of awareness permeates education and makes the provision of adult special education a lower priority for decision makers at all levels.

The committee recommends, therefore:

7. That programs and services for the disabled be better advertised, particularly in rural and Northern Saskatchewan.
8. That educational institutions explicitly identify service to the disabled in their advertising and promotion.
9. That the Saskatchewan Adult Basic Education Association actively promote the rights of disabled adults to appropriate education through the creation of public awareness, advocacy, and provision of professional development.

Program Accessibility

Lack of or inadequate financial support is cited most frequently as a barrier to post-secondary education for disabled adults. A number of agencies and counsellors noted that the various sponsoring programs, such as the Saskatchewan Skills Development Program, VRDP, Workers Compensation and CEC Special Needs, each have eligibility criteria which, taken together, still leave many individuals ineligible.

Colleges indicated that high program costs and low enrollment restrict them in making programs available for disabled students. This problem is intensified in rural areas where there are fewer numbers of disabled students who require programs. Moving to urban centers is not always an option for disabled adults, whose needs must be taken into account in the province's ambition to increase education and training opportunities throughout Saskatchewan.

Increasing accessibility to programs for disabled adults will require a greater number of appropriate programs adapted to meet special needs. Educational institutions will need to be better prepared to accommodate disabled students, by developing or acquiring expertise in instructional and counselling staff, appropriate diagnostic and assessment resources, as well as special equipment and appropriate building design.

Only 6 of the 27 educational institutions surveyed indicated a willingness or ability to tailor programs to the needs of the disabled student. Others noted support services or equipment but not program modification.

Obvious barriers to the physically disabled are lack of transportation and the physical inaccessibility of educational institutions. The following recommendations address issues of program access for disabled adults.

10. a) That Saskatchewan Education increase its VRDP budget to accommodate the increasing demand for educational services to disabled adults.

    b) That Saskatchewan negotiate with the federal government to modify the eligibility criteria for VRDP, to accept disabled persons who are marginally employed.

11. That publicly funded educational institutions be required, within a reasonable time, to make their permanent or long term facilities physically accessible to the disabled, to require physical accessibility when entering into and renewing leases, and, where choice exists, to use accessible short term facilities.

Assessment and Student Evaluation

> "If screening/placement is satisfactory and students progress at a normal pace there is no need to do more. However, where "roadblocks to learning" occur in depth diagnosis is required and identification of the problems so that remediation and effective learning strategies can be initiated". (Pauline Greenough, University of Saskatchewan.)

Assessment plays a key role in the education of disabled adults. It identifies skills and aptitudes as well as special needs so that appropriate career goals and training plans can be developed. It differentiates between learning difficulties caused by poor early teaching and neurologically based learning disabilities. Assessment thus serves a diagnostic and prescriptive function as well as assisting in career choice.

Only 5 out of 27 educational institutions surveyed provide an assessment service. The tools used in those assessments were generally described as inadequate and inappropriate for some types of disabilities.

Scarcity or absence of diagnostic and assessment resources outside the major urban centers constitutes a practical barrier for many disabled adults interested in furthering their education.

Experts are not available for consultation and referral regarding adult special needs students, or to determine the effectiveness of specific diagnostic tools applied to adult learners.

The VRDP Selection Committee identified assessment, particularly vocational, as a major problem and urged that more practical assessments be initiated. According to the VRDP Committee, assessment in non-urban centers is particularly difficult, especially for specific disabilities such as the hearing impaired, sight impaired, and mentally handicapped.

The Social Services Rehabilitation Unit has done some research on the development of vocational assessment processes but nothing has been implemented. The VRDP committee is particularly concerned to achieve more realistic vocational planning including earlier identification of the possibility of success, an indication of what is realistic within a reasonable time period, and decentralized access to assessment.

Agencies and counsellors, and especially instructors, emphasized the inappropriateness of current evaluation requirements in adult basic education programs. In particular, the requirement that students write a timed, standardized, multiple choice exam to qualify for graduation at the Adult 10 level was singled out. The committee shares the view of respondents that standards set for the achievement of certificates must be maintained; that is, the disabled student must show mastery of the same skills required of non-disabled students in order to graduate. However, a variety of alternative evaluation methods need to be available to assess these skills, so that a method appropriate to the specific disabling condition experienced by the student can be selected.

In recognition of the importance of assessment to the provision of effective educational services to disabled adults the committee recommends:

12. a) That each college and institute campus provide for at least one staff person to become qualified and available to provide basic assessment services.

12. b) That a provincial assessment capacity be developed to accommodate the more difficult assessments referred by colleges and institutes.

13. That student evaluation methods be appropriate to specific disabilities.

Curriculum

Respondents overwhelmingly advocated integration (mainstreaming) and individualization augmented with supports to meet the complex and varied needs of disabled adult students. Agencies, college staff and disabled students identified several modifications to existing programs as essential to disabled adults' successful participation in them.

Although instructors identify a few areas where existing curricula are inadequate (e.g., a requirement for "oral" communication for hearing impaired students), they more frequently called for guidelines in adapting the current curricula to meet the needs of disabled students. Modifications in instructional methods and resources rather than in the curriculum itself are preferred so that certification standards may be maintained.

Students need employment preparation programs including life skills. Some respondents suggested that a lack of social skills is a bigger obstacle to the employment of disabled adults than their disabilities. However, the current Employment Readiness and Living Skills curriculum guide does not specifically address disabilities or the coping skills required by specific disabilities.

A number of agencies and colleges also stressed the need for personal development and life enhancing programs that are not restricted by employment goals. For example, the computer comfort program initiated by Cypress Hills Community College and the Neil Squire Foundation addresses the needs of severely disabled who are currently confined to level 4 care homes.

A student computer instructor, placed at the Wascana Rehabilitation Centre by the Neil Squire Foundation, expressed frustration at not having the expertise to teach two severely disabled adults to read and write - though they could learn. "Imagine a severely disabled adult wanting to be educated. He/she can't tell you for they can't speak. They're over the age of 21 and because of neglect or ignorance cannot read."

There are also program delivery issues, particularly related to time. Part-time rather than full-time programming will be required by some disabled students. In addition, limited course lengths are inappropriate for some; programs need to be longer for those who have additional barriers to overcome. Student/teacher time is an important factor. Lower student/teacher ratios, the use of initial and supplementary tutors, and the use of computers may be required.

A number of college staff and disabled students spoke of the need to assist non-disabled students to adjust to having a disabled student in their classroom. Adult basic education curricula should contribute to developing understanding and non-discriminatory attitudes by educating students about disabling conditions and the needs and capabilities of disabled adults. The British Columbia ABE curriculum includes such a unit in their social studies program.

In recognition of these program needs the committee recommends:

14. That Saskatchewan Education provide for the development of ABE academic and ERLS curricula to include modifications and resource materials appropriate for the special needs of disabled students.
15. That Saskatchewan Education include in the ABE curriculum a component on disabilities.

16. a) That the Distance Education Council recently announced by Saskatchewan Education include in their deliberations service to disabled adults, especially the home bound.

    b) That the Literacy Council recently announced by Saskatchewan Education pay particular attention to the development of literacy learning opportunities for disabled adults.

Counselling and Career Development

Survey respondents repeatedly stressed the need for individual and group counselling, both career and personal, to be readily available on an ongoing basis. Several respondents also suggested that the counselling process be structured and preventative in nature. Many adults with disabilities experience difficulties which are in addition to, or are more severe than, those experienced by non-disabled students. Lack of self-confidence, poor educational experience, academic frustration, past failures, social isolation, and physical difficulties are common barriers. Because of these additional difficulties, there is a greater need for personal counselling support including advocacy within the institution, coaching regarding adjustment on a personal level, and dealing with support agencies. The specific disabling condition experienced by the student, particularly if it involves a communication problem, may increase the time necessary for effective counselling and may require additional skills of the counsellor (e.g., being able to communicate in sign language).

Career counselling and planning is also a major concern of agencies, counsellors, and the VRDP committee. Moreover, disabled students, their instructors, and the agencies that serve them unanimously insist that there is no point to dead end programming. Adult education programs must be an integral part of career planning and development and should include work placement and experience that realistically leads to permanent employment. The involvement of employers is doubly important because it serves a public education function, i.e. the employer can experience the value of a disabled student/employee.

The committee recommends:

17. a. That counsellor/student ratios be adjusted in programs in which disabled adults enroll to ensure adequate support.
    b. That counsellors working with disabled students be familiar with the particular needs arising from specific disabilities.
18. That educational institutions provide appropriate counselling for disabled adults to develop meaningful career paths.
19. That programs give special priority to work placement/experience for disabled students, in order to create stronger linkages to employment.

Professional Development and Staff Support

Only 6 of the 27 post-secondary institutions surveyed provide their staff with inservice in adult special education. There is a need for more adult special education training in Saskatchewan, besides what is incorporated in university Social Work and Physical Education programs and the institute Personal Development Worker program. One private vocational institution provides exposure to disabled and elderly clients as part of the student practicum.

Professors in the Department of Education of Exceptional Children, University of Saskatchewan, provided inservice training to some ABE staff on adult learning disabilities. Professional associations such as the Saskatchewan Adult Basic Education Association (SABEA) have also organized a number of workshops and subject council sharing sessions. Instructors indicate that these workshops and opportunities for instructor sharing with colleagues have been significant sources of support.

Most provinces provide leadership by offering seminars, workshops, and reference material regarding disabled students to staff in their institutions. British Columbia has issued a number of handbooks on working with disabled adults.

The Regional Library system of Saskatchewan can provide support to rural and Northern Saskatchewan instructors in the form of reference material regarding adult special education.

There is a lack of research or documented experience regarding successful adult special education practises. Instructors, therefore, have no guidance in selection of effective approaches when working with the disabled. Four colleges indicated informal classroom research and program development efforts in adult special education. The Northern Institute of Technology and the University of Saskatchewan hoped to undertake research into the incidence of, and appropriate responses to, adult learning disabilities.

Otherwise, no research or documentation of successful practises is underway in the province and no initiating, supporting, or co-ordinating mechanism exists to ensure that such research is undertaken and the results widely disseminated.

The committee, therefore, recommends:

20. That Saskatchewan Education develop or acquire handbooks and reference material on adult special education specific to Saskatchewan.
21. That Saskatchewan Education encourage educational institutions to provide for staff inservice, consultation, and professional sharing in adult special education.

22. That the Saskatchewan Library and Regional Library system house and disseminate reference material about adult special education.
23. That Saskatchewan Education support research by practitioners in adult special education and provide for the publication and dissemination of results.

Program Evaluation

VRDP evaluates programs and services funded by them on the basis of the clients' success in securing employment. In other provinces, programs and services and student progress are evaluated by the Department of Education and program staff. VRDP programs are evaluated in other provinces annually and/or there are ongoing monitoring and evaluation processes.

High quality, effective educational services for disabled adults can be provided only if professionals involved are supported in their striving for excellence by on-going program evaluation. Furthermore, continuation of programs should be linked to evidence that they are effective. Decisions respecting effectiveness and future directions of programs should benefit from the advice of those most affected - disabled students - and from those best informed about the needs of the disabled and best situated to assess the impact of educational services, i.e. agencies which serve disabled adults.

The committee recommends:

24. a) That Saskatchewan Education evaluate publicly - funded educational institutions regarding preparedness to serve disabled students and provision of quality service.

b) That adult educational institutions regularly evaluate the effectiveness of their programs and services in meeting the needs of disabled students.

c) That these evaluations involve the students and agencies affected by the service.

V. THE NEXT STEP

The committee viewed its task as one of initiating rather than completing an examination of the issues related to adult special education. It has identified useful resources outside and within the province to be drawn on in implementing its recommendations.

The committee is concerned that many of its recommendations apply to the entire post-secondary system, not only colleges, and that broader input is required before further development can take place.

A number of agencies who responded to our surveys, moreover, expressed a concern that the committee represented only college and departmental viewpoints. It was their position that the development of policies and services for the education of disabled adults should have active representation from disabled adults themselves and from the agencies which serve them. The committee has benefitted greatly from the advice and information provided by these agencies. In addition, colleges and the Department of Education have historically called upon broadly representative advisory committees to guide the development of policy and practise in education. The committee supports the suggestion of these agencies for broader involvement and, given the concern in adult education for the student transition from school to the workplace, we would encourage involvement of employers as well as the groups previously mentioned.

The creation of a more broadly representative advisory committee at an early stage would ensure that the implementation plan is both relevant and effective. This newly constituted committee could review the responses to our report as one of their first activities.

The committee, therefore, recommends:

25. That Saskatchewan Education form a consultative committee including disabled adults, adult educators, representatives of appropriate agencies and business to advise on adult special education.
26. That Saskatchewan Education formulate a three year plan for the implementation of the preceding recommendations.

VI. CONCLUSION

Everyone knows there are adults with various disabilities - we even know how many and with what kind, except for learning disabled.

Everyone knows, as well, that disabled adults have learning needs - and probably greater than other people.

Little observation or investigation is required to discover that the learning needs of disabled adults are not as well served as they might be.

The Advisory Committee on Adult Basic Special Education hopes that, by its work over the past year and this report, it has called attention to what, in a sense, everyone who stops to think knows.

The committee hopes it has done so in such a way that the logic of taking action on its recommendations is inexorable and sufficiently compelling to command resources.

To generate the public awareness and resolve necessary to support actions the committee recommends a wide distribution of its report.

APPENDIX A

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That a Saskatchewan provincial policy be developed which ensures that disabled adults have full access to appropriate educational opportunities.
2. That adult education institutions adopt pro-active adult special education policies.
3. a) That guidelines, developed in relation to these policies, identify a degree of preparedness to provide adult special education services provincially (system wide) and institutionally.

   b) That ongoing operating budgets reflect the cost of implementing these guidelines.
4. That programs in which disabled students enroll provide access to special education services including such staff expertise, instructional resources, modified facilities and reduced student/teacher ratios, as may be appropriate.
5. That Saskatchewan Education provide leadership and support regarding adult special education by:

   a) appointing a provincial adult special education consultant;

   b) ensuring the availability of an adult special education reference and resource service including a central loan service for costly specialized instructional equipment;

5. c) providing for co-ordination between the K-12 and post-secondary systems and within the post-secondary system in relation to resource sharing and assisting students with special needs to achieve their personal, educational, and vocational goals.

6. That Saskatchewan Education design and implement a systematic adult special education needs identification process, incorporating agency, K-12, and post-secondary institutional input, to facilitate informed planning to be undertaken by the post-secondary system.

7. That programs and services for the disabled be better advertised, particularly in rural and Northern Saskatchewan.

8. That educational institutions explicitly identify service to the disabled in their advertising and promotion.

9. That the Saskatchewan Adult Basic Education Association actively promote the rights of disabled adults to appropriate education through the creation of public awareness, advocacy, and provision of professional development.

10. a) That Saskatchewan Education increase its VRDP budget to accommodate the increasing demand for educational services to disabled adults.

    b) That Saskatchewan negotiate with the federal government to modify the eligibility criteria for VRDP, to accept disabled persons who are marginally employed.

11. That publicly funded educational institutions be required, within a reasonable time, to make their permanent or long term facilities physically accessible to the disabled, to require physical accessibility when entering into and renewing leases, and, where choice exists, to use accessible short term facilities.

12. a) That each college and institute campus provide for at least one staff person to become qualified and available to provide basic assessment services.

    b) That a provincial assessment capacity be developed to accommodate the more difficult assessments referred by colleges and institutes.

13. That student evaluation methods be appropriate to specific disabilities.

14. That Saskatchewan Education provide for the development of ABE academic and ERLS curricula to include modifications and resource materials appropriate for the special needs of disabled students.

15. That Saskatchewan Education include in the ABE curriculum a component on disabilities.

16. a) That the Distance Education Council recently announced by Saskatchewan Education include in their deliberations service to disabled adults, especially the home bound.

    b) That the Literacy Council recently announced by Saskatchewan Education pay particular attention to the development of literacy learning opportunities for disabled adults.

17. a) That counsellor/student ratios be adjusted in programs in which disabled adults enroll to ensure adequate support.

    b) That counsellors working with disabled students be familiar with the particular needs arising from specific disabilities.

18. That educational institutions provide appropriate counselling for disabled adults to develop meaningful career paths.

19. That programs give special priority to work placement/experience for disabled students, in order to create stronger linkages to employment.

20. That Saskatchewan Education develop or acquire handbooks and reference material on adult special education specific to Saskatchewan.

21. That Saskatchewan Education encourage educational institutions to provide for staff inservice, consultation, and professional sharing in adult special education.

22. That the Saskatchewan Library and Regional Library system house and disseminate reference material about adult special education.

23. That Saskatchewan Education support research by practitioners in adult special education and provide for the publication and dissemination of results.

24. a) That Saskatchewan Education evaluate publicly - funded educational institutions regarding preparedness to serve disabled students and provision of quality service.

    b) That adult educational institutions regularly evaluate the effectiveness of their programs and services in meeting the needs of disabled students.

    c) That these evaluations involve the students and agencies affected by the service.

25. That Saskatchewan Education form a consultative committee including disabled adults, adult educators, representatives of appropriate agencies and business to advise on adult special education.

26. That Saskatchewan Education formulate a three year plan for the implementation of the preceding recommendations.

APPENDIX B

SASKATCHEWAN ADVANCED EDUCATION AND MANPOWER
COMMUNITY COLLEGES BRANCH
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ADULT SPECIAL EDUCATION

TERMS OF REFERENCE

FUNCTIONS

The Advisory Committee on Adult Special Education will assist the Colleges Branch of the Department of Advanced Education and Manpower in developing policy and procedures for the development and operation of adult basic education programs for special needs students and particularly disabled adult students.

PURPOSES

The Committee will:

1. Assist the Department of Advanced Education and Manpower to identify problems being encountered by disabled students in ABE programs, colleges who are enrolling disabled students, and by disabled adults attempting to gain access to ABE programs.

2. Assist the Department to predict the demand for ABE by disabled adults in various regions of the province.

3. Recommend to the Department of Advanced Education and Manpower and to Saskatchewan's community colleges policies and procedures respecting adult special education as it relates to ABE.

4. Make recommendations to the Department of Advanced Education and Manpower regarding organizational aspects of adult special education delivery as it relates to ABE (e.g., roles responsibilities, funding arrangements, etc.).

5. Make recommendations to the Department regarding appropriate "career ladders" for disabled adults.

6. Make recommendations to the Department regarding areas for further study or development in adult special education.

ANTICIPATED PROCESS

The committee will seek input, either written or verbal, from colleges and selected agencies, organizations and government departments, that will assist it to:

1. Examine relevant documentation regarding disabled adults and adult special education from both provincial and other sources.

2. Review relevant studies relating to adult special education.

3. Explore and report the present state of affairs in adult special education delivery in Saskatchewan's adult basic education programs.

4. Examine the implications for ABE policy and procedure of increasing enrollment of disabled adults.

5. Examine present funding mechanisms and organizational/administrative procedures affecting adult special education.

6. Develop recommendations and a policy proposal by June 30, 1987 for review and reaction by colleges, the Department of Advanced Education and Manpower, and those agencies and organizations who were consulted.

7. File a final report with the Department which takes into account the feedback received on the original proposal.

COMPOSITION

The committee will be comprised of:

1. A Director of Adult Basic Education from a community college.

2. An Academic Studies Co-ordinator from a community college.

3. An Instructor from a rural college.

4. The Department's VRDP Co-ordinator.

5. A representative of the Community College Branch of the Department.

6. A counsellor who has worked with disabled adults.

7. A Co-ordinator from Saskatchewan Indian Community College.

8. A representative from a northern college.

ESTABLISHMENT

Committee members will be appointed by Saskatchewan Advanced Education and Manpower for a one year term.

MEMBERSHIP

Re-assignments and re-organization in the course of the committee's existence prevented the committee from achieving full and consistent membership.

Barb Carr, Coordinator, VRDP, Training Programs Coordination Branch
Al Hergott, Assistant Director, Colleges Branch
MaryAnn Jalbert, Instructor, Parkland Community College
Iris Lang, Counsellor, Regina Plains Community College
Carole Sedgwick, Coordinator, ABE, Saskatchewan Indian Community College
Lily Stonehouse (chairperson), Director, ABE, Saskatoon Region Community College

APPENDIX C

Table 1: RESPONDENTS TO SPECIFIC QUESTIONNAIRES FROM THE ADULT BASIC SPECIAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Questionnaires Sent to:	Number Sent	Respondents
Institutional Policies	49	27
College ABE Co-ordinators	17	19
College Counsellors	16	24
Disabled Students	40	9
ABE Instructors	200	136
Organizations Serving Disabled Adults	50	28
Community Health Representatives on Reserves	69	3
Regional Libraries, Saskatchewan Library	12	7
Saskatchewan Department of Education	1	1
Provincial VRDP Co-ordinators	12	7
Provincial Adult Education Departments	12	6
University Adult and Special Education Departments	4	2
	482	269

APPENDIX D

CANADIAN HEALTH AND DISABILITY SURVEY 1983-84

The survey showed there were 1,537,000 disabled Canadians between the ages of 15-64 years.

The survey showed there were 61,000 disabled persons in Saskatchewan between the ages of 15-64 years. (61,000 represents 8.3% of the Saskatchewan population.)

Educational Level:

In Canada, there are 2,448,000 disabled persons with less than a high school education.

- 69,000 between the ages of 15-34 years.
- 202,000 between the ages of 35-54 years.
- 274,000 between the ages of 55-64 years.

Types of Disabilities:

In Saskatchewan:

Seeing Disabled

Total number of seeing disabled persons	17,000
Total number using aids	14,000

Hearing Disabled

Total number of hearing disabled persons	36,000
Total number using aids	9,000

Mobility Disabled

Total number of mobility disabled persons	72,000
Total number using aids	20,000

APPENDIX E

Table 2: CURRENT EDUCATION LEVEL OF DISABLED ADULTS (15 and over) BY AGE

Current Education Level	Age Group			
	15-34 thousands(%)	35-54 thousands(%)	55-64 thousands(%)	65 + thousands(%)
0 to 8 years	69(17.5)	202(34.8)	274(48.8)	521(57.2)
High School*	232(58.7)	262(45.2)	221(39.4)	291(31.9)
Some Post Secondary Education	35(8.9)	30(5.2)	19(3.4)	27(3.0)
Post Secondary Certificate/Diploma	39(9.8)	53(9.1)	29(5.2)	47(5.2)
University Degree	20(5.1)	33(5.7)	18(3.2)	25(2.7)
	395 (100)	580 (100)	561 (100)	911 (100)

*Includes persons who have completed or had some secondary education but who have not had any post-secondary education.

Table 3: DISABLED PERSONS BY DEGREE OF DISABILITY AND LABOUR FORCE STATUS (AGE 15 AND OVER)

Labour Force Status	Degree of Disability				
	total (000)%	some disability (000)%	moderate disability (000)%	major disability (000)%	degree unknown (000)%
All Disabled Adults	2,448(100)	1,315(100)	568(100)	345(100)	219(100)
Employed	675(27.6)	449(34.2)	112(19.7)	25(7.3)	88(40.2)
Unemployed	98(4.0)	58(4.4)	21(3.7)	-(-)	17(7.8)
Not in Labour Force	1,675(68.4)	808(61.5)	435(76.6)	318(92.2)	114(52.1)

Note: The degree of disability is based upon the number of activities of daily living which the respondent was incapable of performing, for example, a major disability indicates that the respondent was unable to perform three or more of the seventeen activities of daily living; a person with some disability has trouble with at least one activity of daily living but is capable of performing all seventeen.

APPENDIX F

"Opportunities: Post-secondary Education and Training for Students With Special Needs" CMEC, February 1987.

"Looking to the future, the Statement identifies a number of priority areas in which provincial ministers, in cooperation with institutions and other interested parties, will be focusing their continuing efforts. These priorities are as follows:

- to continue to investigate and develop ways to facilitate access by special groups to post-secondary programs and services;
- to pursue the introduction and expansion of specially designed education and training programs and services as needs are identified;
- to integrate, when and to the extent possible and by means of appropriate support services, special students into regular education and training programs;
- to pursue the establishment of linkages with other ministries, departments and agencies, including those representing the interests of special groups, to ensure the effectiveness, efficiency and adequacy of programs and services in meeting the needs of special students;
- to coordinate government and agency initiatives so that they work together to assist students with special needs to achieve their personal, educational and vocational goals; and
- to cooperate interprovincially, through the aegis of the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, in such areas as the identification of needs, the development of cooperative mechanisms, when appropriate, to meet those needs, and the exchange, among provinces, of information on successful programs and initiatives designed to assist special needs groups to participate in post-secondary education and training," (p. 2).